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Berlin, transforming it into a fortress which is the ancestor of modern Brandenburg. A Slavic coalition inspired by this offensive was defeated in 929 near Wittenberg, and the Saxon sphere of influence was thus extended to the Oder river. While Henry I showed little interest in colonizing the area he had won, and was solely concerned with collecting tribute, a movement of colonization was first reflected by a large number of fortified German settlements established east of the lower Elbe under Henry's successor Otto I, and a similar practice prevailed further south in the reconquered territory between the Saale and the upper Elbe. The German treatment of their Slavic subjects was far from gentle: captives taken in war were ruthlessly butchered, and chieftains invited as guests were treacherously slain. As a result, a Slavic revolt of 983 threw the Saxons out of Brandenburg. For a hundred and fifty years the Slavic coastal area from Lübeck to the Oder was thus free of Saxon encroachment, and it was not until after 1125 that the linguistic frontier in this region advanced beyond where it had stood in Charlemagne's day.

With the election of Duke Lothar of Saxony as King of the Germans in 1125, the situation altered. Even before his accession to the throne, Lothar had been known to the Slavs as a dangerous adversary, and no such drastically anti-Slavic policy as his had been seen since Henry the Fowler two hundred years before. His collaboration with the Danes broke up the Slavic principalities on the Baltic shore east of Holstein, and after Lothar's death in 1137 the coastline between Kiel and Rostock was soon in German hands. Wholesale colonization by Westphalian and other Low-German settlers immediately ensued under reasonably peaceful conditions, which unfortunately were interrupted by a fanatical crusade against the Slavs in 1147, in the vicissitudes of which most of the newly won territory was cruelly devastated. The result was thirty years of conflict in which the last independent group of Baltic Slavs was obliterated. Meanwhile Brandenburg had come back under German control when its Slavic chief died intestate

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to do with the protesting prelates,[11] or openly dissociated themselves from their attitude.

By way of retort, the first number of the *Moscow Patriarchy* published a message from the Council of Russian Bishops, assembled for the election, inviting Christians to pray for the victory of the Red Army and the fulfilment of the scriptural text invoked by Alexander Nevsky: 'He who strikes with the sword shall perish by the sword'. On September 8, this same Council had excommunicated 'as adversaries of the Cross of the Lord, all who have been guilty of treason to the common cause of the Church and gone over to Fascism'; the bishops and clergy guilty on this head were removed from their sacred office.

* * *

To conclude, the only obstacles to a general reconciliation of the Slavonic peoples came from the Poles. To summarise here the vicissitudes of Soviet-Polish relations since the pact of December, 1941, would mean not only relating the most stormy chapter in the Allies' war diplomacy, but also recalling the relations of the various groups among the Polish exiles, the antagonism between the London Committee and that of Lublin, the frontier problem, and also the perhaps more tragic problem of the political, religious, and social concepts on the basis of which the Polish State was to be re-born. Once again it was made very clear that Poland occupied a place apart on the map of the Slavonic world, and formed an obstacle to the realisation of full Slav solidarity.

Like the other Slavonic States, however, she had been caught up in the advance of the Russian armies sweeping across Eastern Europe—an onrush which settled the fate of the Slav nations, with or without their consent, as a consequence of their liberation. For three or four years Germany had been the second Slavonic power in the world. She had imposed on her Serbian, Croatian, Slovak, and Bulgarian satellites not only the horrors of the occupation, but also ideologies strongly opposed to their temperaments and their history; an impersonal and tyrannical idea of the State, a 'New Order' which was nothing but a hypocritical subjection, anti-Semitism which—with the exceptions of Poland and Imperial Russia—the Slavonic nations had always regarded with horror. When the collapse came, all these nations turned

[11] Among these, however, we must include the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Argentine.

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When the collapse came, all these nations turned against an aggressor who had not only trodden their sovereign rights under foot, but even violated their consciences. The Governments which had been at his beck and call were either handed over to popular justice, or taken along with the baggage of the defeated army. On September 7, 1944 Bulgaria broke with the Reich; a few days later the Pavelich Government was dispersed; Slovakia gradually passed under the control of the partisans; Belgrade was occupied by the Tolbukhin army on the following October 20, the day that Tito liberated Ragusa. In the last few weeks of 1944 the map of war operations reflected the real political positions of the Slavonic world, based on Soviet victory. 'Fraternal union with Russia is one of the most deeply-rooted sentiments of the Slavonic peoples', declared King Peter of Yugoslavia in a communiqué dated from London on January 11, 1945.

Within this Slavonic world, relations were entering upon a new phase. They were ceasing to be a speculation of the learned world, a poet's dream, a field for sentimental outpourings. They had become a reality of international life. The resisting elements in the Slavonic community had at first represented a complete range of specimens of the struggle against oppression—the Czech's masked militancy, the Poles' street-fighting, Serbian guerrilla warfare, Bulgarian terrorism. They had made contact, concerted their action. Early in 1945 it was possible to speak of a 'Slavonic Front', a thing unknown to history. Something had changed in the destiny of the Slavs. The representative of Pavelich's Croatia accredited to the Vichy Government was one day lunching with some French ministers. He went so far as to say, in an expansive moment: 'All the same, the time has come to give the Slavs their place in the sun!'

A very unexpected remark in the mouth of the envoy of an Axis Government, and, moreover, an envoy who had officially repudiated his ethnical ties.[12] It passed unnoticed by the guests, who were not very well acquainted with the historical laws of European evolution; but it revealed the depth and unanimity of the Slavs' faith in a revival of their fortunes as the result of the Second World War.

[12] It should be noted that the visit to France of Croatia's 'diplomatic' representatives seems to have inspired them with a clearer feeling of realities. The first of them, Kokotovich, went to Switzerland, whence he sent a letter to the French Foreign Minister, begging him not to pay any attention to what his successor did. Moreover, the latter, Krenik, joined Kokotovich in Switzerland a few months later.

[i. Slavonic nations - Analyst]